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**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

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**WASHINGTON STATE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
MENTAL HEALTH PLAN  
SEPTEMBER 30, 2006**

**Year One –  
Focus on Organizing for  
Transformation and  
Public Input**

The mental health community in Washington State envisions that all people in Washington who experience mental health challenges will lead happy, productive and fulfilling lives, free of stigma, in a safe and least restrictive environment. Since the Mental Health Transformation Grant was awarded to Washington State in October 2005, the Transformation Work Group (TWG) and its partner agencies have been working to develop a shared understanding and common agenda for the transformation of Washington's system of mental health services. The results of those efforts form the foundation for this Comprehensive Mental Health Plan (CMHP).

Using the President's New Freedom Commission goals as a framework for action, we have engaged in a broad public process to develop a roadmap for achieving a transformed mental health system. Chapter 1 describes Washington's transformation activities, as they relate to the six federal goals, and two additional Washington-specific goals added by our state's TWG.

Year One of the grant has focused on gathering broad-based public input on the strengths of the current system and defining a vision for what a transformed mental health system will look like. Chapter 2 describes in detail the governance and organization structure established to carry out this work. The TWG appointed seven subcommittees comprised of consumers, families, and representatives of the mental health system to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the mental health system on specific populations: children, youth and families; youth in transition; adult consumers and families; older adults; homeless; co-occurring disorders; and criminal justice.

Input gathered from outreach efforts (including over 40 public input sessions and RSN listening sessions) was used by the subcommittees to define what outcomes a transformed system should be designed to achieve. The 27 priority outcomes identified by the subcommittees each correspond to one or more of the President's goals and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.

Task groups, comprised of subject matter experts, then developed specific strategies for achieving these outcomes. Task groups focused their work in six areas: fiscal systems; information technology; evidence-based, promising and emerging practices; cultural competence; evaluation; and social marketing. These outcomes and strategies provide the framework for Washington's transformation activities for the next four years of the Mental Health Transformation Grant.

The strategies defined through this process are wide-ranging. Some address discrete short-term needs, others are long-range, conceptual and visionary. Members of the task groups will continue to work with the TWG in Year 2 to assess the financial and organizational feasibility of the strategies, and to establish priorities among the strategies. The TWG confirmed its support for the overarching principles and most of the strategies defined by the task groups. In a small number of cases, the TWG deferred action awaiting further definition. The TWG also adopted two goals in addition to the six outlined by the New Freedom Commission to address Washington's commitment to assuring meaningful employment and secure housing for consumers and their families.

The Mental Health Transformation Project (MHTP) team is working now with partner agencies to identify current or planned activities that move the transformation agenda forward. In particular, staff are reviewing state agency strategic plans recently submitted to the Governor to determine where state activity is already underway, and where gaps exist that will need to be addressed.

State agencies are currently developing budget requests and proposed legislative packages for the 2007-2009 budget period. By September, the agencies will submit these requests to the Governor's Office. Because of the need to finalize the CMHP by early September, these budget/legislative requests will not be included in the first year's plans. Once we know what is incorporated into the Governor's legislative package, and which items are supported by the Legislature, a more accurate gap analysis can be conducted. Once that is complete, the state will have a better idea where to focus its resources to address community recommendations.

*Mental Health in Tribal Nations*

**Year Two –  
Facilitating the  
Implementation of  
Transformation**

The TWG has been working with Washington tribes on a Government-to-Government basis, to ensure that mental health transformation extends into Tribal communities. The MHTP developed a parallel process providing Tribal input, tribal outcomes and strategies, with the support of the American Indian Health Commission, the Department of Social and Health Services, and Health Services Indian Policy Advisory Committee, and through a contract with the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB). A report on the outcomes of this effort is provided in Chapter 3.

It is apparent that years of funding services for the most in need has created a mental *illness* system; not a mental *health* system. In Year 2, the TWG will engage all transformation partners in a crucial discussion about how and when a systemic redesign of the system of providing mental health services in Washington will occur.

If we are to achieve our objectives related to improving the health of all individuals and families residing in Washington State, we must have a strong vision. The TWG agrees with the vision of making Washington State the healthiest state in the nation and we believe Washington State must place more emphasis on prevention and early intervention as well as cross-system planning to improve the health of our residents.

Our subcommittees' work reflects that our current system of care, while expensive, is inadequate. In response they have thoughtfully articulated a strong set of recommendations for addressing the shortcomings of the current system.

The Transformation Project will pursue a dual approach, one track seeking improvements to the existing system, as recommended by the subcommittees; and concurrently they will seek to enhance the system built around illness with a system designed to support prevention and health promotion. True transformation can only occur if we do both. A more detailed discussion of prevention and mental health in Washington is contained in Chapter 4.

	Reviewing the work of the past year, six major forward-looking themes have emerged that will guide the work of the MHTP in Year 2 and beyond.
<i>Transformation Theme 1:</i>	The state of Washington views mental health as part of overall health.
<i>Transformation Theme 2:</i>	Mental health is incorporated into existing prevention and early intervention initiatives and more coordination occurs among these programs.
<i>Transformation Theme 3:</i>	Following the lead of the Washington Health Foundation, state agencies, with leadership from the Governor, Legislature and Superintendent of Public Instruction, will develop a core set of benchmarks (outcome measures) to track the health of Washington state residents.
<i>Transformation Theme 4:</i>	State agencies will increase opportunities for their consumers/families/youth to establish agency priorities and direction.
<i>Transformation Theme 5:</i>	State agencies will improve cross-system data collection, data analysis and data reporting systems that focus not only on outputs but report on actual outcomes-reductions in negative consequences and improvements in overall consumer/family/youth/ community health indicators.
<i>Transformation Theme 6:</i>	State agencies, local government, providers, advocates, consumers, and families will make every effort to implement and improve the specific recommendations of the subcommittees. Cross-system collaborations that focus not only on symptoms, but on citizens overall health, wellness and recovery must be paramount if the system is to improve, and we are to reduce negative consequences and improve the lives of our consumers, family members, and our communities.
<b>EVALUATING TRANSFORMATION IN WASHINGTON</b>	Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussion of Washington’s plan for evaluating the transformation effort. The primary purpose of evaluation in this project will be to provide information useful to managing the Transformation and to hold those involved accountable to the outcomes specified in this plan. Secondly, the evaluation has been designed to ensure accountability to SAMHSA for performance and outcomes of the Initiative.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The role of the TWG in the next phases of the MHTP will shift. The TWG will not, itself, implement transformation. It will be up to the partner agencies to take up the challenge of incorporating transformational activities into their own planning and implementation. Over the next year and beyond, the TWG and the MHTP staff will refocus their efforts to provide facilitation, coordination and support to participating agencies in their efforts to translate the vision into concrete actions.

State agencies will need to modify their existing strategic plans, given Transformation priorities, and establish detailed implementation plans. These detailed plans can then be used for measuring our progress in the future.